

Meeting Minutes

SR 162 Puyallup River Bridge (McMillin Bridge) Project Section 106 Consultation Meeting

June 21, 2010
12:30 – 2:30 pm
USACE, Seattle District

Participants:

Chris Jenkins, USACE, Cultural Resources Program Manager
Sandra Manning, USACE/DOE, Project Manager
Lauren McCroskey, USACE, Program Manager, Center of Expertise, Preservation of Historic Structures & Buildings
Steve Fuchs, WSDOT Olympic Region, Project Engineer
Jeff Sawyer, WSDOT Olympic Region, Environmental & Hydraulics Manager
Dave Evans, WSDOT Olympic Region, Senior Environmental Engineer
Craig Holstine, WSDOT HQ, Bridge Historian
Roger Kiers, WSDOT HQ, Archaeologist
Russell Holter, DAHP, Preservation Design Reviewer
Matthew Sterner, DAHP, Transportation Archaeologist

Participants by teleconference:

Kitty Henderson, Historic Bridge Foundation, Executive Director
Dr. Bob Hadlow, ODOT, Bridge Historian
Dr. Jim Hoard, Save Our Bridge non-profit (Murray Morgan Bridge)
Bob George, Retired WSDOT State Bridge Preservation Engineer and Bridge Historian

- Introductions
- Brief project background provided by Sandra Manning, explaining that the USACE is the federal lead agency for the project (no federal funding) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, but WSDOT was authorized to initiate consultation and conduct the cultural resources studies
- Steve Fuchs explained the need for the project. Citing information from WSDOT bridge engineer Ron Lewis, he stated that the existing bridge is structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. Its sufficiency rating is 30.21. (Put in context, the Alaskan Way Viaduct's sufficiency rating is 8.99.) The McMillin Bridge is too narrow, presenting a hazard for trucks crossing the bridge simultaneously in both directions. The concrete is experiencing spalling, exposing the rebar. There are currently no load restrictions.

- Questions/comments:
 - What is the daily traffic count? Percentage of trucks?
 - Sufficiency rating?
 - How is structural deficiency determined? Visual inspection?
 - Jim Hoard: Why not construct new bridge next to the existing bridge, and divert pedestrians to the old bridge?
 - Kitty Henderson would like copy of inspection reports, and other reports evaluating the bridge's condition and cost estimates of alternatives to demolition.
 - Bob Hadlow: What other options have been considered?
- In response to the question of whether other options have been considered, Steve Fuchs described how he had attended a Bridge for Kids project meeting in Orting in April 2009. Steve identified several issues with moving the bridge for such a use: the bridge would need special support; to lift it would require 2 of the largest cranes in the U.S.; there is not enough space to lift the bridge out in one piece because the railroad bridge is in the way; the bridge would need rehab if used by Bridge for Kids, and would cost them more than a new bridge
- Questions:
 - Bob Hadlow: Will the new bridge have two travel lanes? Have you considered a couplet design?
 - Why do you need to tear out the old bridge?
 - How much money is there for demolition? (\$1 million) Can that money be used towards preservation?
- Bob George joined the teleconference, and stated that the bridge is nationally significant.
- Kitty Henderson stated that this meeting is the beginning of the discussion about ways to avoid, minimize, and then mitigate. All parties need to sit down and review alternatives before concluding that this nationally significant bridge will be demolished. Bob Hadlow agrees. Kitty and Bob have both seen concrete Howe truss bridges before, but never a bridge like McMillin. Plus, this bridge was the idea of a nationally-significant engineer. Kitty would like a copy of the NRHP Determination of Eligibility (DOE) report and an opportunity to comment.
- Question from Jim Hoard: How far does \$1 million go towards fixing the bridge up enough for pedestrian load?
- Craig Holstine expressed that historic preservation is a goal and a public policy established in the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as other federal and state

laws, and needs to be explored thoroughly. It is our responsibility as a public agency to pursue public policy. WSDOT is not simply a transportation agency, but should be a preservation agency and an environmental agency (the latter stated by former WSDOT Secretary Doug MacDonald).

- Lauren McCroskey listed several items that need to be addressed:
 - A greater public process is needed. There needs to be more outreach to the community. What other uses might there be for the bridge? The community needs to see examples of such uses.
 - What about pedestrian use? What is the cost of rehab in place? What is the cost of moving and rehab elsewhere?
 - What about a couplet design? What is the cost of rehab for use as a single-lane bridge?
 - What about shifting the bridge to the railroad bridge location?
 - What about leaving the bridge as a monument in place?
- Bob George remarked that it would likely be extremely expensive and difficult to move the bridge.
- Russell Holter asked about adaptive re-use of the bridge. Given the potential for significant Mt. Rainier events, and the need for maximizing rather than minimizing the number of evacuation routes, emergency management should be included in these discussions.
- Question: What is the NEPA document type?
- Jeff Sawyer noted that other environmental concerns include critical salmon habitat. Bridge removal improves habitat and flood issues, reducing scour potential on the new bridge piers .
- Kitty Henderson requests NRHP DOE and bridge inspection reports, and a map. Also notes that preservation of the bridge as a monument is not the ideal solution. She noted that “monument” bridges in Texas have experienced different fates, some becoming sources of community pride, others “trellises,” presumably eyesores in their communities.
- Jim Hoard stated that he would talk to Reuben McKnight to strategize about getting locals interested in the project.
- Question: Enhancement funds available?

- Bob George stated the need to get the message out to the community regarding the historical significance of the bridge. He suggested a newspaper article about the bridge. He also noted that any work associated with rehabilitation of the bridge strictly for pedestrian use would be primarily cosmetic and likely to be considerably less costly than a rehab to enable the bridge to safely carry vehicular traffic.
- Sandra Manning and Chris Jenkins explained that this project is currently slated for a Nationwide permit from the USACE, meaning that NEPA has already been done. However the Sec. 106 compliance process has been not been completed. Proceeding with the project per the Nationwide permit is the Corps' preferred route, but there is still a need to see alternatives and to avoid adverse effect. If it is determined that the effects are more than minimal an Individual Permit may be required. This would require a completed NEPA analysis. The Corps will determine what type of permit will be required.
- Closing thoughts:
 - It is WSDOT's responsibility to open up the request for additional consulting parties, and to get all the info to the consulting parties, including the Puyallup Tribe, which has expressed an interest in seeing the existing bridge removed, primarily for fish habitat enhancement. The Tribe is not likely to be aware of the bridge's unique status.
 - Documentation of alternatives is needed.